Specification Amendments

Please replace paragraph 0035 with the following rewritten paragraph:

0035 A plasma RIE process (I-line etching) is then carried out to etch through the exposed DARC layer 16 and etching stop (hard mask) layer 14, to include partially etching through via plug 24, and IMD layer 12 to partially form a trench opening 28 as shown in Figure 1F. The plasma etching chemistry ~~is~~ preferably has an etching selectivity of I-line photoresist to hard mask of greater than 1. The plasma etching chemistry preferably includes a nitrogen rich chemistry with a smaller amount of oxygen with a nitrogen to oxygen ratio of about 5 to about 10. For example, suitable conditions for etching through metal nitride layers include pressures that are from about 40 to about 100 millitorr. Suitable levels of microwave power supplied to the plasma are from 1000 to about 1500 Watts. Further, a nitrogen flow rate is preferably supplied at a flow rate from about 50 to about 300 sccm with an oxygen flow rate from about 2 to about 10 sccm. After etching through the metal nitride layers, the etching chemistry may include hydrogen to replace at least a portion of the oxygen. During the I-line etching

process, a portion of the trench line photoresist layer 26, IMD layer 12, and via plug 24, are removed as seen in Figure 1F.